IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A weight determining mechanism for a piece of luggage, the mechanism comprising:

a carrying device designed to engage a part of a human body;

at least one resistance mechanism having opposing first and second ends, wherein said resistance mechanism is altered by an application of force on said resistance mechanism whenever the piece of luggage is lifted via the carrying device, said resistance mechanism being coupled to the piece of luggage at the first end and the second end so that the weight of said luggage provides said application of force; and

at least one indicator viewable from an exterior of the ~~grip~~ of the luggage and responsive to alteration of said resistance mechanism when the luggage is lifted via the carrying device, wherein said indicator provides an indication of the weight of the piece of luggage.

2. (currently amended) The mechanism of claim 1 wherein said resistance mechanism is selected from the group ~~comprising:~~ of a coil spring, a rotational dial, an elastic material, a magnetic component, an electrical component, a ~~chemically~~ chemical component reactive to lifting of the bag, and an ~~electrochemical~~ electromechanical element ~~and equivalents thereof~~.

3. (currently amended) The mechanism of claim 1 wherein said piece of luggage comprises one of a backpack, a suitcase, a briefcase, a computer bag, a duffel bag, an upright bag, a garment bag, and a shoulder bag~~, and equivalents thereof~~.

4. (currently amended) The mechanism of claim 1 wherein said carrying device comprises one of a carrying handle, a handle grip, a support, a should strap, and a hip strap, ~~and equivalents and combinations thereof~~.

5. (previously presented) The mechanism of claim 1 wherein said carrying device is generally flexible.

6. (currently amended) The mechanism of claim 1 wherein said resistance mechanism is attached to said luggage via a mounting strip on one of said first and second ends, said mounting strip slidable relative to ~~said bag~~ the piece of luggage when the piece of luggage is lifted via the carrying device.

7. (previously presented) The mechanism of claim 1 wherein said indicator is configured to display a first color corresponding to a first predetermined weight range, and a second color for a second predetermined weight range.

8. (previously presented) The mechanism of claim 1 wherein said indicator comprises a first indicator connected to said first end, and a second indicator connected to said second end.

9. (previously presented) The mechanism of claim 1 wherein said indicator comprises a digital display indicator.

10. (previously presented) The mechanism of claim 1 further comprising a reset or re-zero button, thereby facilitating independent determination of a weight of the piece of luggage and a weight of items loaded into the bag.

11. (previously presented) The mechanism of claim 1 wherein said indicator comprises a series of non-numerical markings.

12. (previously presented) The mechanism of claim 11 wherein said series of non-numerical markings are concealed within said carrying device until the piece of luggage is lifted, and said series of markings are selectively revealed to indicate said weight of said piece of luggage.

13. (previously presented) The mechanism of claim 1 wherein said indicator comprises a plurality of color bands that are sequentially pulled from the carrying device and revealed when the piece of luggage is lifted under increasing amounts of weight, each of said plurality of color bands corresponding to a predetermined weight range and indicating a relative weight of the bag according to predetermined guidelines for a user.

14. (original) The mechanism of claim 13 wherein said color bands comprise bands of red, yellow, and green.

15. (previously presented) The mechanism of claim 1 wherein said indicator comprises a series of numerical markings.

16-18. (cancelled)

19. (currently amended) A weight determining mechanism for a piece of luggage, the mechanism comprising:

means for lifting said piece of luggage, said means for lifting being an integral part of said luggage;

means for determining the weight of said piece of luggage, ~~said means for determining being included within~~ in response to an applied force on said means for lifting; and

means for providing an indication of said weight to a user;

wherein said weight is distributed across said means for determining solely by lifting said means for lifting.

20. (previously presented) The mechanism of claim 19 wherein said piece of luggage comprises one of a backpack, a suitcase, a briefcase, a computer bag, a duffel bag, an upright bag, a garment bag, and a shoulder bag.

21. (currently amended) The mechanism of claim 19 wherein said means for determining is configured to detect an amount of force applied to the means for lifting whenever the piece of ~~baggage~~ luggage is lifted via the means for lifting.

22. (previously presented) The mechanism of claim 19 wherein said means for determining comprises one of a spring means, rotational dial means, an elastic means, a magnetic means, an electrical means, a chemical means, an electrochemical means and combinations thereof.

23. (previously presented) The mechanism of claim 19 wherein the means for providing an indication of said weight to a user comprises one a color coded means, numerical marking means, non-numerical markings means, and a digital display.

24. (previously presented) The mechanism of claim 19 wherein the means for providing an indication of said weight to a user comprises means to indicate a predetermined range of weights to a user.

25. (previously presented) The mechanism of claim 19 further comprising means for resetting or re-zeroing the means for determining, thereby facilitating independent determination of a weight of the piece of luggage and a weight of items loaded into the bag.

26. (previously presented) The mechanism of claim 19 wherein the means for determining comprises a first end and a second end, each of the first and second ends being coupled to the piece of luggage, wherein a weight of the piece of luggage is carried across the means for determining when the piece of luggage is lifted via the means for lifting.

27. (currently amended) A piece of luggage comprising:

a luggage container portion;

a generally flexible lifting element mounted to the luggage container portion and forming an integral part of the container portion, the lifting element defining a primary means of carrying the container portion;

an on-board weight determining mechanism integrated into the lifting element;

wherein the weight determining mechanism comprises a resistance element mechanically subjected to a load bearing weight of the container portion whenever the luggage container portion is lifted with the lifting element; and

an indicator operatively coupled to the ~~resistant~~ resistance element and visually indicating information regarding the load bearing weight to a user when the container portion is lifted via the lifting element.

28. (new) A piece of luggage comprising:

a luggage container portion;

a generally flexible lifting element mounted to the luggage container portion and forming an integral part of the container portion;

an on-board weight determining mechanism permanently connected to the lifting element and subject to a load bearing weight of the container portion when lifted via the lifting element, the weight determining mechanism operable to determine the load bearing weight; and

an indicator operatively coupled to the weight determining element to indicate information regarding the load bearing weight to a user when the container portion is lifted via the lifting element.

29. (new) A piece of luggage comprising:

a luggage container portion;

a generally flexible lifting element mounted to the luggage container portion and forming an integral part of the container portion;

an on-board weight determining element permanently connected across opposing ends of the lifting element, the weight determining element responsive to a load bearing weight of the container portion when lifted via the lifting element to determine the load bearing weight; and

a selectively operable indicator operatively coupled to the weight determining element to indicate information regarding the load bearing weight to a user when the container portion is lifted via the lifting element.

30. (new) The piece of luggage of claim 29, wherein the indicator comprises a digital display.